

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the application. In the Office action dated March 1, 2006, claims 1-13 and 18-22 are allowed, claims 15-17 and 26-28 are objected to, and claims 14 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Renji (Japanese Patent No. 09226476). Responsive to the Office action, claims 14, 23 and 24 are amended. In view of the above amendments and the remarks that follow, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejected claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Objections to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claim 23 as having no clear meaning. Without acknowledging the propriety of the rejection, Applicant has amended claim 23 to more particularly describe selected structural features of the recited fastener. Applicant suggests that, as amended, claim 23 is clear in defining the claimed subject matter, and requests the withdrawal of the objection to claim 23.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 14 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Renji (Japan 09226476). In particular, the Examiner indicates that Renji discloses the claimed automobile molding.

Without acknowledging that the Renji reference anticipates the instant claims, the Applicant has taken this opportunity to amend claims 14 and 24 to recite additional structural elements configured to facilitate the detachment or release of the fastener from the

fastener holder.

In particular, claims 14 and 24 have been amended to recite a fastener that includes a pair of elastic pieces that, when the baseplate and the elastic pieces are inserted into the housing space, are exposed from the fastener holder so that the pieces are operable from outside to deform and disengage the elastic pieces from the engage-and-stop portions of the fastener holder.

Support for the amendments to claims 14 and 24 can be found generally in the specification as filed, and more particularly at page 20, line 18 to page 21, line 22; and in Figs. 9 and 10. Specifically, the specification describes a fastener wherein parts (33a, 34b) of the elastic pieces (34) are exposed from the fastener holder (22) when the base plate (28) and the pair of elastic pieces (34) are inserted into the housing space (29) so as to be operable from outside to cause the elastic pieces (34) to deform and disengage from the engage-and-stop portions (36). Owing to this structural feature, the claimed fastener can be easily released from the fastener holder (22), as described in the specification.

The Renji reference discloses a fastener 42 which is to be inserted in a fastener folder 41. When the fastener 42 is inserted, a pair of side wall deformation preventing pieces 62 of the fastener 42 engage with a pair of mutually opposed side walls 43 of the fastener holder 41 and prevent the deformation of the side walls 43. Renji is, however, silent about the detachment of the fastener 42 from the fastener holder 41. The cited reference fails to disclose or suggest any structural features of the disclosed fastener which are configured to facilitate the detachment or release of the fastener 42 from the fastener folder 41.

In particular, the fasteners of the Renji reference are not configured so that the elastic pieces that are insertable into the fastener holder include parts that are exposed when the fastener is inserted into the housing space and that are then operable from outside such that the elastic pieces can be deformed and disengaged from the fastener holder.

In order to anticipate a claim, the reference must disclose each and every element of the claim. Applicant suggests that Renji does not anticipate the subject matter of claims 14 and 24, as amended. As claims 15-17 and 25-28 depend from claims 14 and 24, Applicants suggest that they are similarly not anticipated by the Renji reference.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 15-17 and 26-28 are objected to as depending upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner has indicated that they would be considered as allowable if amended to include the base claim and any intervening claims.

In view of the amendments to claims 14 and 24, Applicant suggests that those claims are in condition for allowance, and therefore that claims 15-17 and 26-28 are in condition for allowance. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the withdrawal of the objection to claims 15-17 and 26-28.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant suggests that claims 1-28 are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned

if any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephonic interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1540.

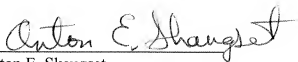
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